GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
TOURISM
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2436
ANSWERED ON:14.12.2015
Mark by World Travel and Tourism Council
Adsul Shri Anandrao ;Patil Shri Shivaji Adhalrao;Shrirang Shri Chandu Barne;Yadav Shri Dharmendra

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the World Travel and Tourism Council has named India as one of the fastest growing tourism destinations in the next ten years;
(b) if so, the details thereof;
(c) whether the Government announced incentives to States for development of tourism;
(d) if so, the details thereof; and
(e) the steps taken by the Government to tap the sources of global tourism?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TOURISM (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)
(DR. MAHESH SHARMA)

(a) and (b): Yes, Madam. As per the media reports, World Travel and Tourism Council has stated that India's travel and tourism economy is due to grow by 7.5 per cent in 2015, which is the highest level of growth of any of the major economies in the world.

(c) and (d): Development and promotion of tourism is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments/UT Administrations. However, Ministry of Tourism (MOT) provides Central Financial Assistance (CFA) to State Governments/Union Territory Administrations for various tourism projects subject to availability of funds, inter-se priority, liquidation of pending utilization certificates against the funds released earlier and adherence to the relevant scheme guidelines.

Recently, Ministry of Tourism has launched following two new schemes for development of tourism in thematic manner:

Swadesh Darshan: Swadesh Darshan was launched for development of theme based tourist circuits in a way that caters to both mass and niche tourism in a holistic manner. Twelve Circuits namely North-East India Circuit, Buddhist Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Krishna Circuit, Desert Circuit, Tribal Circuit, Eco Circuit, Wildlife Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit and Ramayana Circuit have been identified for development under this Scheme.

National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD): This new Scheme has been launched for the development and beautification of pilgrimage sites to tap the growth of domestic tourists driven by religious sentiments and to augment tourism infrastructure at places of pilgrimage to facilitate pilgrims/tourists. In the first phase, cities namely Amritsar, Kedarnath, Ajmer, Mathura, Varanasi, Gaya, Puri, Dwarka, Amravati, Kanchipuram, Vellankanni, Guwahati and Patna have been identified for infrastructure development.

(e): Ministry of Tourism has taken various initiatives to promote tourism and attract more tourists to India. Some of the major initiatives are as below:

i. Publicity and Promotion:

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, promotes India as a holistic destination in the international markets. As part of its promotional activities, the MoT releases campaigns in the international markets under the Incredible India brand-line to showcase various tourism destinations and products including its cultural heritage.

Moreover, a series of promotional activities are being undertaken in tourist generating markets overseas through the India Tourism Offices abroad with the objective of showcasing India's tourism potential and promoting tourism to the country. These promotional activities include participation in travel fairs and exhibitions; organising road shows, Know India seminars & workshops; organizing and supporting Indian food and cultural festivals; publication of brochures, offering joint advertising and brochure support, and inviting media personalities, tour operators and opinion makers to visit the country under the Hospitality programme of the Ministry.

The Ministry of Tourism provides financial assistance to Stakeholders and Tourism Departments of States/Union Territories for undertaking promotional activities under the Marketing Development Assistance (MDA) Scheme.

ii. e − Tourist Visa (e-TV):

The Government of India has introduced the facility of e-TV for the citizens of 113 countries at 16 airports. Introduction of e-TV is a Path breaking measure by the Government in easing entry formalities in the country.

Government of India has also revised the e-TV fee in four slabs of 0, US$25, US$48 and US$60 from November 3, 2015. Earlier e-TV

application fee was US$60 and bank charge as US$2 which was uniform for all the countries. The revision of Visa fee has been done on the principle of reciprocity. Bank charges have also been reduced from US$2 to 2.5 % of the e-TV fee. During the period January to October, 2015 a total of 2,58,182 e-TV holders visited India indicating the success of the new online process.

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